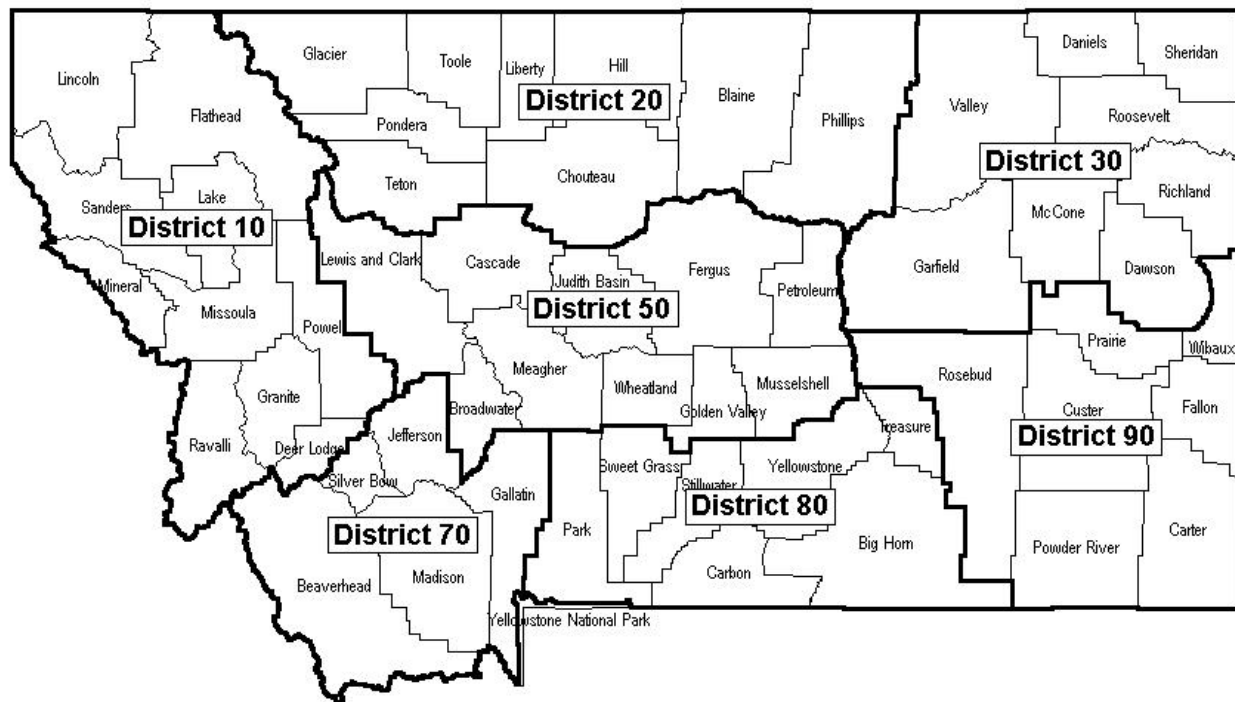




2003 MONTANA AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

**2001-2002
*County Estimates***

Montana Agricultural Statistics Districts



About the Cover:

A farmer once equated growing hay to growing gold. Hay is an important crop in Montana. The state ranks 13th nationally in all hay production, and 10th nationally in alfalfa production. Montana's all hay production for 2002 accounted for 3.1% of U.S. hay production and alfalfa hay accounted for 4.0% of U.S. alfalfa hay production. In 2002, the value per acre for all hay was \$144, while all wheat was \$94 per acre and barley was \$120. Although cash receipts for wheat outpaced the value of hay by almost four times in 2002, hay was the second leading crop in acreage, outpacing barley, potatoes and sugar beets. You can see why that farmer felt hay was like growing gold.

The cover photo was taken by Peggy Stringer, State Statistician of the Montana Agricultural Statistics Office. This hay field is located near Lewistown, Montana.